**Bill to regulate LOB Sector**

*298. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring a Bill to regulate and remove the anomalies in the Urban Co-operative Bank (UCB) Sector;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof and by when the Bill would be brought in the Parliament;

(c) whether Government are aware that RBI has put on hold scheduling of UCBs, issues of licenses for new branches etc. in view of the proposed Bill;

(d) whether Government would direct RBI to issue licenses to UCBs to open new branches;

(e) if so, the number of applications by UCBs for new branches pending with RBI; and

(f) by when they would be given permission?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d)to(f) Reserve Bank of India's Annual Policy Statement, for the year 2004-05, refers to the issuance of fresh licence to UCB Sector. It stipulates that in order to make this sector strong, healthy and stable, fresh licences will be issued only after a comprehensive policy on UCBs, including an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, is put in place. In accordance with the announcement, any fresh proposal for organization of new UCBs or for conversion of cooperative credit societies into UCBs is to be considered only after the situation is reviewed and fresh announcement is made by Reserve Bank of India in this regard. As a first step, in view of the regulatory co-ordination brought about through singning of MoUs with State Governments and based on the positive experience of the Task Force for Urban Cooperative Banks (TAFCUBs).it was proposed in the Mid-term Review to allow financially sound UCBs registered in States that have signed MoU with the Reserve Bank of India and those registered

under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002 to convert existing extension counters into full fledged branches subject to certain conditions. Guidelines in this regard have been issued to UCBs on November 13, 2006.

For new branches/licences, RBI has informed that only upon completion of review of each State in regard to the progress of restructuring of UCBs, it would permit new branches/licences.

**Opening of regional centre of Sahitya Academy in Patna**

†*299. SHRI JABIR HUSAIN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at present four regional centres of Sahitya Academy are functional in Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that no regional centre of the academy has so far been opened in Hindi-Urdu speaking areas; and

(c) if so, by when Government will take the necessary decision on opening a regional centre of Sahitya Academy in Patna (Bihar) while considering the demand?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir. Sahitya Academy has its Regional Offices at Bangalore, Mumbai and Kolkata. It has a Sub-Regional Office in Chennai under its Regional Office, Bangalore.

(b) No, Sir. The Sahitya Academy's Head Office located in New Delhi takes care of the languages of Northern India including Hindi and Urdu.

(c) At present there is no proposal to open a Regional centre of Sahitya Academy in Patna.

**Supply of gas to co-operative societies**

*300. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of localities where piped cooking gas connections have been given in each of the Metro cities in the country,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.